

2022-2026



STRATEGIC PLAN

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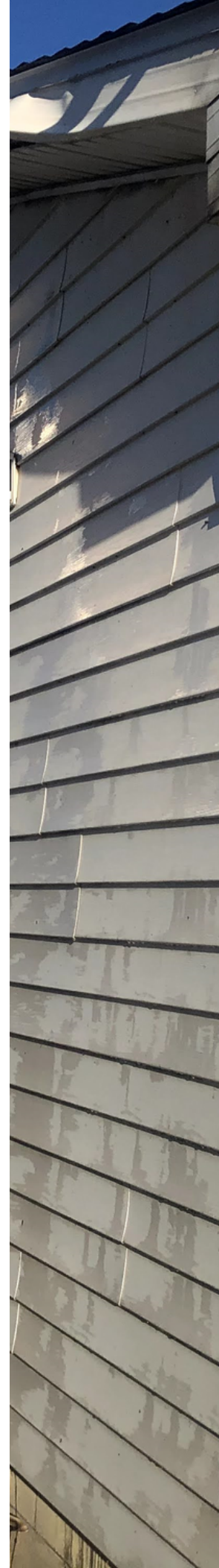
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Any plan we create will have budgetary implications. We discuss the implications of our plan in pages eighteen through twenty.



INTRODUCTION

Cedar Area Fire & Rescue is located in the heart of beautiful Leelanau County. Our single fire station is situated next to Victoria Creek in the Polish historical town of Cedar. On April 1, 2016, the Solon/Centerville Fire Department, owned by Solon and Centerville Townships and serving Kasson and Cleveland townships by contract, was reorganized as Cedar Area Fire & Rescue. This new department is governed by an interlocal agreement that includes Solon, Centerville, Cleveland, and Kasson Townships as equal partners. This new inter-local agreement permits a five-member Fire Board to provide guidance to the department and includes one representative from each partner township and a citizen-at-large.

Cedar Area Fire & Rescue is a combination department with full-time and part-time staff that provide all levels of firefighting, emergency medical services and technical skills to our community twenty-four hours a day 365 days a year. With our two-person duty crew, we are able to provide Basic Life Support ambulance transport for EMS calls. For those calls that require a higher level of care than we can currently provide, we receive Advanced Life Support through contracts with Leland Township Fire & Rescue, Mobile Medical Response, and Glen Lake Fire & Rescue.

Fire responses in our jurisdiction are handled with a multitude of specialized equipment including a fire engine, water tanker, wildfire truck, and a Kubota UTV. These vehicles carry specialized equipment which allow us to handle incidents including structural and wildland fires, vehicle accidents, ice and water rescues, wilderness and other types of technical rescues and Hazardous Materials incidents. Our department has an International Organization for Standardization (ISO) rating of 9-10. This rating reflects a multitude of criteria that we use to better provide service to our community.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cedar Area Fire & Rescue is focused on consistent and sustainable improvement of the department. As part of this focus, five year strategic and budget plans are used to guide development choices over a multi-year timeline.

The 2018-2022 strategic plan focused heavily on staffing and capital equipment needs, and substantial progress has been made on those needs over the last five years. The 2022-2026 strategic plan looks to make improvements in the departments incident response capabilities, training, prevention activities, staff wellness, and support services.

During late 2021 and early 2022, surveys were distributed to members of the community, the Fire Board and department staff. The community surveys focused on gathering community perceptions of what the department was doing well, what could be improved, and what the biggest concerns were regarding the department for members of the public. The surveys of the Fire Board and department staff focused on identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the department.

These surveys were then used to develop the five areas of focus for the 2022-2026 strategic and budget plan. In each of the five areas of focus, three main strategies were identified with sub-tasks to accomplish each of these strategies within the five-year time frame.

By 2026, the focus on these five strategic areas will allow Cedar Area Fire & Rescue to dramatically improve its ability to respond to incidents of all types throughout our coverage area, as well as improving the ability to respond to overlapping incidents and incidents where the department is called to assist neighboring departments through mutual aid contracts. These areas of focus will also help us to improve our staff training, improve staff health and physical ability, and improve the overall financial and administrative well-being of the department. And finally, the focus on prevention activities will allow the department to develop community preparedness programs and better disseminate information to the public.

OUR DEPARTMENT



The Fire Board

Board Chairman: Greg Julian - Kasson Township
Vice-Chair: Rick Royston - Cleveland Township
Treasurer: Ron Schaub - Centerville Township
Secretary: Chris Comeaux - Solon Township
Member-at-Large: John Depuy



Administration

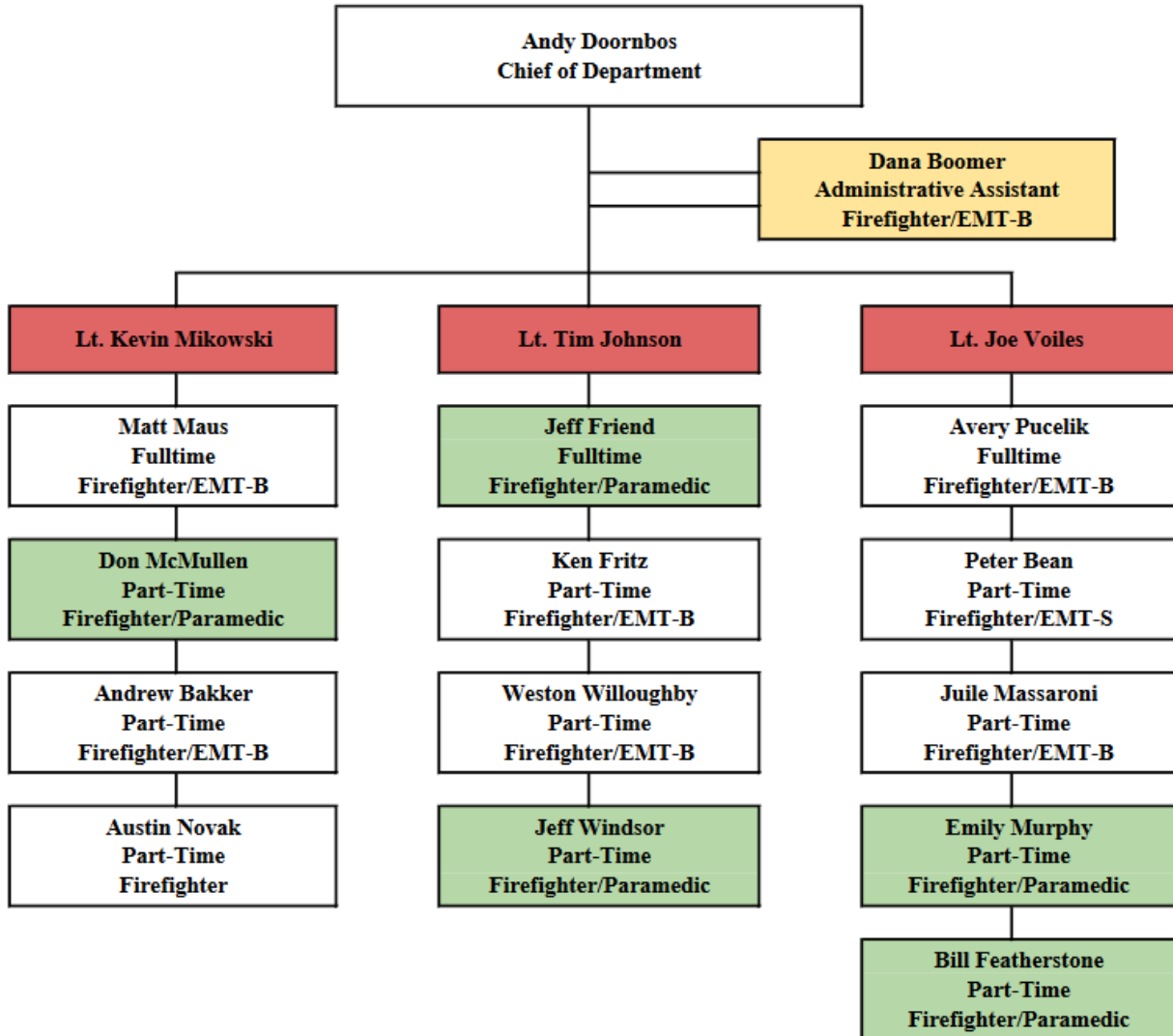
Our department administrators are Chief Doornbos and Administrative Assistant Dana Boomer. Together they handle all wages, benefits, budgetary, statutory and regulatory business for the department as well as responding to incidents.



Staff

Our dedicated team of Firefighter / EMTs and Paramedics are on duty 24 hours a day - 365 days a year. The Duty Crews are led by our 3 Lieutenants who oversee the daily required duties of each shift such as equipment checks, training, public education and serving as incident commanders for incidents. We have some part-time members that do not work many shifts at the station but respond from home when the need arises.

ORGANIZATION CHART



APPARATUS

Cedar Area Fire & Rescue has six main pieces of apparatus:

Engine 811 - A 2020 Pierce Sabre 4x4, the engine is the primary response apparatus for all structure fire calls within our response area. It carries water, firefighting equipment, and equipment for vehicle extrications and technical rescues.

Tanker 822 - A 2012 International, the tanker carries 2,000 gallons of water and some supplemental equipment for fire-related incidents. The tanker responds to all structure fire incidents in our response area.

Brush 841 - A 2018 Ford F-250, the brush truck is the primary response apparatus for all wildland fire calls within our response area, as well as serving as the tow vehicle for our UTV. The brush truck carries 200 gallons of water and specialized wildland fire fighting equipment.

Kubota 881 - A 2015 XT 900, the Kubota is equipped with tracks that allow us to navigate in rough and snow-covered terrain. The Kubota responds to all wildfire incidents and is equipped to remove medical patients from remote areas that other apparatus cannot access.

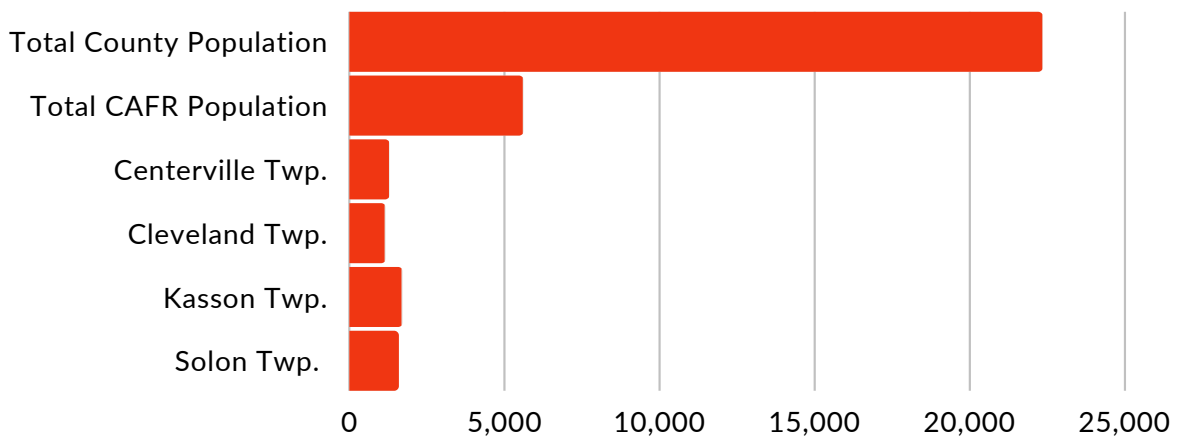
Ambulance 891 - A 2019 PL Custom F-450, Ambulance 891 is our primary ambulance and responds to all medical calls within our service area. It is equipped with medical equipment and light rescue equipment for smaller scale incidents.

Ambulance 892 - A 2012 American Rescue International, Ambulance 892 is our secondary ambulance. It responds to calls when overlapping medical calls are received, or when 891 is out of service.

All CAFR equipment is also able to respond to neighboring districts as part of the mutual aid system. Most of these calls are in neighboring districts, but Brush 841 has responded as far as Blair Township and Karlin to assist on large wildfires or to provide backup for neighboring counties when their units are sent to incidents further away.

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

POPULATION



5,555 OUR POPULATION AS OF
THE 2020 CENSUS

35% TOTAL COUNTY LAND
MASS WE COVER

As of the 2020 Census Leelanau County is home to a population of 22,301 residents. Our four townships make up 5,555 residents which is an increase of 132 residents over the last ten years. These numbers don't truly represent our population, though, as we have many seasonal homes that add to our call volume but are not represented as year round residents. There are 4,815 residential properties in our primary response area and roughly half (49.75%) do not have a principal residence exemption according to the Leelanau County Equalization Department. This means that nearly half the homes in our area are second/vacation homes.

25% OF THE COUNTY
POPULATION ARE
OUR RESIDENTS

173 SQUARE MILES
COVERED IN OUR
FIRST DUE AREA

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

STRUCTURES

As of April 2022, there are a total of 5,381 parcels in the four township area. Of these, 3,523 are considered "improved" by having at least one building on them. The improved parcels occupancy type breakdown is:

Class	Centerville	Cleveland	Kasson	Solon	Total
Agriculture	82	21	45	33	181
Commercial	12	13	34	83	142
Industrial	0	1	7	0	8
Residential	819	784	781	808	3192
Total	913	819	867	924	3523

Included in these numbers of improved and unimproved parcels are dozens of properties that pose special hazards to firefighting and EMS operations, have been shown to have higher call volumes, or have demonstrated the need for additional training and equipment. These include National Park Service and Leelanau Conservancy properties with histories of technical rescues and trauma injuries, Glen Lake Community Schools with its high population during the school year and sporting events, properties (including commercial, industrial and agricultural) where hazardous materials are stored and used, and numerous residential properties with driveways that are inaccessible to fire equipment in winter conditions.

SURVEYS

In late 2021 and early 2022, Cedar Area Fire & Rescue surveyed staff, board members, and community members regarding the direction of the department and the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the department currently and in the coming years.

While there were unfortunately a minimal number of community responses submitted, there was still good information received by the department. The community was in general agreement that CAFR was doing well at improving the department, decreasing response times, and helping the community.

Suggestions for improvement included continuing to decrease response times, growing the department, improving educational opportunities for the public, continuing to provide more information to residents (especially regarding costs and progress), and increasing employee pay.

The biggest concerns expressed by community members included response times, future costs, department stability, staffing for specific populations or incidents (including elderly populations and wildland fires), and accessibility to incidents during times of road closures (due to storms, powerlines down, or fires).

SURVEYS

Surveys solicited from staff and board members focused more specifically on a SWOT analysis of the department, looking for input on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats faced by the department for the five-year planning period.

SURVEY RESULTS - STRENGTHS

Continued Growth	Up-To-Date Equipment & Apparatus	Support From Local Community	Proactive Leadership	Willingness to Train Employees
Mutual Aid Relationships	High Departmental Standards for Staff	Relationship with Local Community	Culture	MABAS Participation
Competitive Union Contract	Excellent Staff	Ability to Do More With Less	Cooperation Between Admin and Staff	

SURVEY RESULTS - WEAKNESSES

No Fire Inspection Programs	Small Staff for a Large Service Area	Overwork of Full-Time Staff	No Citizen Friendly Area at the Station	Small Capital Reserve
Outdated Living Quarters	Small Budget/Lack of Long-Term Budget Planning	Lack of Comprehensive Hands-On Training	Over-Dependence on Mutual Aid	High Part-Time Member Turnover Rate
Outdated Station	Poor Retention of Staff	Lack of In-Person Communication	Lack of Second Station	

SURVEYS

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SURVEY RESULTS - OPPORTUNITIES

Increase "Community Service" Aspect	Increasing Staff to Three Per Shift	Transition to Advanced Life Support	Community Paramedicine Program
Expand Mutual Aid Agreements	Request Increased Resources / Funding from the Community	Construction of New Station on West Side of Service Area	Seeking Additional Grant Funding
Increase Inter-Department Training	Improve Communication within the Department	High-Value Development Providing Increased Tax Funding	Bolster Relationships with Other Governmental Agencies

SURVEY RESULTS - THREATS

Growing Too Quickly	Ability to Stay Competitive with Wages and Benefits	Small Budgets	Rapid Influx of Population Leading to High Call Volume	Increased Major Weather Events
Expanding Service Types Beyond Department Capabilities	Lack of Communication	Large Coverage Area for One Station	Increased Wildland-Urban Interface	Increased Overlapping Calls for Service
Struggling to Secure Needed Funding	Staff Burnout Due to Mandatory Overtime	Lack of Affordable Housing for Staff	Nation Wide Personnel Shortage	

FIVE PILLARS

After analyzing the responses to the board, staff and community surveys, Cedar Area Fire & Rescue developed five pillars on which to focus during the 2022-2026 planning cycle.

These five pillars are:



- Response - Overall Improvement of Department Service Delivery
- Training - Increase Training Quality and Applicability
- Prevention - Heighten Operational Awareness and Community Preparedness
- Wellness - Improve Overall Department Wellness
- Support Services - Improve Department Efficiency and Long Term Viability

In each of these five areas, three main strategies were identified to guide improvement. Each strategy was then broken down into specific goals and then individual tasks which will be assigned to various department members.



RESPONSE

Under Response, CAFR will be focusing on the overall improvement of department service delivery. This will be completed through the implementation of three strategies:

Strategy 1 - Agency Upgrade to Full-Time Advanced Life Support Transport

This has been an ongoing project for CAFR since at least 2018, and is scheduled to be completed in April 2023, with ongoing monitoring thereafter. This strategy involves training current employees as Paramedics, hiring three new employees to bring daily staffing levels to three persons from the current two, upgrading the licensing level of the department as a whole, purchasing new equipment, and reviewing department probationary procedures.

Strategy 2 - Department Procedures and Policies Review

An ongoing project in 2022 and 2023, department staff will be conducting a full review of department policies and procedures, including those related to fire suppression, medical services, and human resources. Staff will work with outside advisors to ensure that all policies meet the requirements of state and federal law and guidelines, and to ensure that all policies promote the best interest of Cedar Area Fire & Rescue.

Strategy 3 - Reduce Average Response Times

This strategy focuses on both internal department actions and work at a broader Fire Board, Township Board, and community level. Departmental action will be focused on reducing the amount of time that elapses between when units are dispatched and when they leave the station. However, the majority of the response time to an incident is contained in the drive time to an incident scene - a major concern in our rural area. Therefore, a major focus of the Fire Board and Township Boards in the 2022-2026 time frame will be the need for the construction of a second station. This second station, located in the western portion of the service area, will cause a substantial reduction in response times to Kasson and Cleveland Townships while also reducing response times to our overlapping calls in Centerville and Solon Townships.



TRAINING

Under Training, CAFR will be focusing on increasing training quality and applicability. This will be completed through the implementation of three strategies:

Strategy 1 - Increase Distance Learning

There are numerous programs in the state and country that have classes which would be beneficial to CAFR's training program. These include the National Fire Academy and the Illinois Fire Service Institute at the University of Illinois. Cedar will be exploring the department's ability to send members to these programs, as well as the department's ability to expand on-site training which would be open to our mutual aid partners.

Strategy 2 - Have Three Deployable Members on the MABAS 3701 Special Operations Team

The MABAS 3701 Special Operations Team is a group of first responder personnel from the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) northern Michigan region. The Special Operations Team is made up of firefighters with special training in technical rescue and hazardous material incidents, including. CAFR will be expanding the training of its members in these areas, including rope operations, confined space operations, and hazardous materials, in order to better serve both CAFR's service area and the region as a whole.

Strategy 3 - Improve Overall Department Level Training

Continued, varied training is of the utmost importance for a department like ours, where call types cover the range from standard EMS and structure fire calls to vehicle accidents, water rescues, technical rescues, and wildland fires. For this strategy, CAFR will be focusing on improving the quality of online training, updating the current probationary training process, and increasing the amount of training done with other departments in the county and region.



PREVENTION

Under Prevention, CAFR will be focusing on heightening operational awareness and community preparedness. This will be completed through the implementation of three strategies:

Strategy 1 - Increase Operational Awareness

Knowing your service area is an important tenet of the fire service. For this strategy, CAFR will be increasing the knowledge of the department about the large number of commercial and agricultural occupancies in the service area. By completing pre-plans of commercial buildings, gathering information about hazardous materials storage, and identifying properties with the potential for hazardous incidents, and then disseminating this information to department members, CAFR will be able to respond faster and more safely to incidents across the service area.

Strategy 2 - Review and Develop Community Preparedness Programs

Helping property owners make their properties safer has the potential to substantially decrease the number and severity of incidents to which CAFR is asked to respond. CAFR will be focusing on programs which assist with the installation of smoke detectors and advise property owners on making their properties more defensible in case of wildfire. In addition, CAFR will be researching the creation of a home safety assessment and evaluation program.

Strategy 3 - Increase Department's Online Presence

For this strategy, CAFR will be focusing on using the department's online presence to disseminate information to the public. This will include finalizing and launching a department website, developing a process for posting monthly department statistics, and improving the quality and regularity of safety messages regarding fire and EMS topics.



Under Wellness, CAFR will be focusing on improving overall department wellness. This will be completed through the implementation of three strategies:

Strategy 1 - Develop Yearly Occupational Physical Ability Assessment

Knowing the physical abilities of our members is a critical part of being able to respond quickly and safely to all incidents. CAFR will be focusing on researching and developing a yearly occupational physical ability assessment, as well as increasing the emphasis on daily exercise for members.

Strategy 2 - Provide Members with Resources to Improve Their Physical Fitness

While the emphasis on daily exercise for members is an excellent beginning for members looking to improve their overall physical fitness, other resources should be provided. For this strategy, CAFR will be focused on assessing and improving the current equipment provided for physical fitness. In addition, the department will be researching the ability of the department to offer dietary assistance to members and certify a member as a personal trainer to encourage members to follow safe, healthy regimens for daily exercise.

Strategy 3 - Increase Cancer Risk Reduction Efforts

Cancer risk reduction is a major initiative throughout the fire service. CAFR will be initially pursuing this initiative through providing extra sets of gear to allow primary gear to be properly cleaned after fires and hazardous materials incidents. In the longer-term planning horizon, the department will be working to improve exhaust ventilation in the equipment bays and researching the creation of a cancer screening program for employees in coordination with Munson Occupational Health.



SUPPORT SERVICES

Under Support Services, CAFR will be focusing on improving department efficiency and long-term viability. This will be completed through the implementation of three strategies:

Strategy 1 - Improve Incident Notification Technology

For this strategy, CAFR will be working with Leelanau County Dispatch and other local departments to improve our ability to notify members about incidents and convey important information as incidents are proceeding. This includes the expansion of current incident notification technology to allow the mapping of water points, pre-planned properties, and other important locations, and the sharing of that information between departments for mutual aid incidents.

Strategy 2 - Improve Statistics, Analytics and Maintenance Tracking Ability

Being able to accurately track call volumes, call types, and department assets allows the department to be able to better allocate resources and funding. Over the 2022-2023 period, CAFR will focus on improving the software that is used for these functions.

Strategy 3 - Create Facilities Plans for Current and Future Buildings

In order to appropriately allocate department resources, facilities plans for the maintenance and capital improvement of the current building and the needed second station must be completed. For this strategy, the fire board and administrative staff will focus on determining financial responsibility for capital improvements and developing a policy on capital projects criteria with input from outside experts. In addition, the Interlocal Agreement is open for renewal in 2025, and planning for this will likely involve extensive discussion regarding future facilities planning.

BUDGET OVERVIEW

Cedar Area Fire & Rescue is over 85% funded by contributions from Centerville, Cleveland, Kasson and Solon Townships. The 2022/23 Fiscal Year operating budget totals \$1,043,404.48. Of this, \$937,404.48 is contributed by the townships, while the remainder is funded through charges for ambulance transports, utility company standbys, and ambulance standbys at Glen Lake sporting events.

EXPENSES

Over 70% of the operating expenses for CAFR are personnel-related, including wages and benefits for the full- and part-time staff. Other expenses include training, uniforms and personal protective equipment, vehicle and equipment maintenance, medical supplies, fuel, and building maintenance and utilities.

CAPITAL BUDGET

The four townships will also contribute a total of \$88,370.91 to the department for capital expenses in the 2022/23 fiscal year. This money is used to pay for new capital equipment, such as apparatus, air packs, EMS equipment, and station equipment. In 2022, capital monies will be used for loan payments for the primary ambulance and engine, as well as any other capital needs as determined by the Fire Board.

CAFR maintains a replacement schedule for all capital equipment, including apparatus, medical equipment and in-station capital items such as air compressors and the station generator. Monitoring and responsibly utilizing the capital budget is a major function of the Fire Board and department administrative staff, as all equipment must be kept in usable condition to be able to properly respond to all incidents to which the department is called.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Since 2016, CAFR's budget has increased on a yearly basis. Over the last six years, these increases have allowed the department to transition to a 24/7 staff, hire a full-time fire chief, begin the transition to Advanced Life Support (ALS) services, increase training, and generally improve the department.

While not all of the strategies and goals associated with the 2022-2026 planning horizon have major budget implications, most have associated costs that will need to be managed and accounted for.

Goals with more minor budget implications include:

- Cancer risk reduction initiatives - Buying additional sets of turnout gear to allow for time to clean gear between incidents is an important function of any cancer risk reduction initiative. The costs associated with this will need to be accounted for in future budget cycles.
- Training - Maintaining an adequate training budget is a necessity for the department to continue to improve. Training in all areas, including fire suppression, medical services, technical rescues, and community preparedness, will need to be funded over the course of the five-year plan.
- Improving department software - Software programs, including dispatch notifications, communications, asset tracking, payroll and human resources, and run reporting, are an important part of a fire and EMS industry that is rapidly moving to digital solutions. These programs are critical to department operations and planning and costs associated with them will need to be managed in future budget cycles.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Continued increases in yearly funding provided by the townships to our department will be needed. Demand for department services continues to grow and we must expand our ability to meet the needs of our community.

Strategies and goals from this plan with major budget implications include:

- Transition to ALS service delivery, including increase of daily staff to three members per shift - This is on target to be completed by mid-2023, and the budget for the 2023/24 fiscal year has been approved by the four townships. Moving to ALS in 2023 necessitated a 15% increase in the budget over the 2022/23 fiscal year, an increase felt necessary by both the Fire Board and the township boards due to increasing call volumes.
- Development of a second station - Increasing demand for department services and extended response times to the western portion of the service area necessitate the development of a second station. This will be a major capital expenditure, needing research into long-term funding options and increased capital contributions over an extended time frame.
- Capital improvements to existing station - Major capital improvements are needed to the existing station in Cedar, as detailed in the 2021 Station Evaluation. These improvements will allow the provision of services from the existing station to continue uninterrupted and maintain the value of the building.